

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (ORIGINAL) An intravenous catheter introducer assembly having a safety feature to prevent accidental needle sticks, said introducer assembly comprising:
- a. a needle assembly comprising an elongated hollow tubular needle having a proximal end attached to a needle hub, a distal end extending therefrom, and a lumen running therebetween, said needle having a groove disposed on an outer surface thereof between said distal and proximal ends;
 - b. a protector including a hollow member having an open distal end, and a clip mounted to said hollow member, said clip having a resilient leg extending into said hollow member, said protector is coaxially slidably disposed around said needle with said resilient leg abutting said outer surface of said needle; and
 - c. a catheter assembly comprising an elongated hollow tubular catheter having a proximal end attached to a catheter hub and a distal end extending therefrom, said catheter coaxially disposed about said needle, said catheter hub having a retainer for keeping said protector within said catheter hub until said catheter assembly and needle assembly are separated wherein said resilient leg engages said groove and secures said protector to said needle such that said open distal end of said protector is distal to said distal end of said needle.

2. (ORIGINAL) The introducer assembly of claim 1 wherein said protector hollow member is a cylindrical tubular member having open proximal and distal ends, said clip being between said ends.

3. (ORIGINAL) The introducer assembly of claim 1 wherein said protector clip is U-shaped to define a pair of resilient legs, each such leg extending into said protector hollow member.
4. (ORIGINAL) The introducer assembly of claim 1 wherein said needle and said protector hollow member have non-circular cross sections such that said protector hollow member cannot rotate with respect to said needle.
5. (ORIGINAL) The introducer assembly of claim 1 wherein said groove on said needle is a concentric groove running around a circumference of said needle without penetrating into said lumen.
6. (ORIGINAL) The introducer assembly of claim 1 wherein said groove on said needle comprises a notch cut into said needle.
7. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) An intravenous catheter introducer assembly having a safety feature to prevent accidental needle sticks, said introducer assembly comprising:
- a. a needle assembly comprising an elongated hollow tubular needle having a proximal end attached to a needle hub, a distal end extending therefrom, and a lumen running therebetween, said needle having a groove disposed on an outer surface thereof between said distal and proximal ends;
 - b. a protector including a hollow member having an open distal end, and a clip mounted to said hollow member, said clip having a resilient leg extending into said hollow member, said protector is coaxially slidably

disposed around said needle with said resilient leg abutting said outer surface of said needle; and

- c. a catheter assembly comprising an elongated hollow tubular catheter having a proximal end attached to a catheter hub and a distal end extending therefrom, said catheter coaxially disposed about said needle, said catheter hub having a retainer for keeping said protector within said catheter hub until said catheter assembly and needle assembly are separated wherein said resilient leg engages said groove and secures said protector to said needle such that said open distal end of said protector is distal to said distal end of said needle, said protector comprising a resilient washer disposed concentrically within said catheter hub and fixedly attached thereto, said washer having an insider diameter less than an outside diameter of said protector.

8. (ORIGINAL) The introducer assembly of claim 1 wherein said needle is cylindrical.

9. (ORIGINAL) The introducer assembly of claim 1 wherein said protector hollow member includes a bridge, said protector clip being secured to said hollow member by said bridge.

10. (ORIGINAL) The introducer assembly of claim 9 wherein said clip is a wireform.

11. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) An intravenous catheter [[The]] introducer assembly[[, of claim 1]] having a safety feature to prevent accidental needle sticks, said introducer assembly comprising:

- a. a needle assembly comprising an elongated hollow tubular needle having a proximal end attached to a needle hub, a distal end extending therefrom, and a lumen running therebetween, said needle having a groove disposed on an outer surface thereof between said distal and proximal ends;
- b. a protector including a hollow member having an open distal end, and a clip mounted to said hollow member, said clip having a resilient leg extending into said hollow member, said protector is coaxially slidably disposed around said needle with said resilient leg abutting said outer surface of said needle; and
- c. a catheter assembly comprising an elongated hollow tubular catheter having a proximal end attached to a catheter hub and a distal end extending therefrom, said catheter coaxially disposed about said needle, said catheter hub having a retainer for keeping said protector within said catheter hub until said catheter assembly and needle assembly are separated wherein said resilient leg engages said groove and secures said protector to said needle such that said open distal end of said protector is distal to said distal end of said needle, the outer surface of the needle immediately proximal to the groove having a first diameter, the outer surface of the needle immediately distal to the groove having a second diameter substantially equal to the first diameter.

12. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The introducer assembly of claim 1, wherein the resilient leg engages said groove by flexing into said groove.

13. (NEW) The introducer assembly of claim 1, the protector hollow member having a substantially constant inner cross-section between said distal end and a proximal end thereof.

14. (NEW) The introducer assembly of claim 1, wherein said resilient leg extends generally along a plane that is generally perpendicular to a longitudinal axis of said needle.
15. (NEW) The introducer assembly of claim 1, said retainer keeping said protector entirely within said catheter hub until said catheter assembly and needle assembly are separated.
16. (NEW) The introducer assembly of claim 1, said retainer keeping said resilient leg within said catheter hub until said catheter assembly and needle assembly are separated.
17. (NEW) The introducer assembly of claim 1, said retainer keeping said clip entirely within said catheter hub until said catheter assembly and needle assembly are separated.
18. (NEW) The introducer assembly of claim 3, said resilient legs extending into said hollow member with said needle situated therebetween.
19. (NEW) The introducer assembly of claim 9, at least a portion of said clip being outside said hollow member.
20. (NEW) The introducer assembly of claim 1 wherein said clip is a wireform.